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of the girl's parents, or if he is a married man, both husband and wife remain where they are after the *lablabág* ceremony, namely in the house of the husband or in that of his parents.

C. FAMILY LIFE

It is not rare to find two or more Isneg families living in one and the same house, as these are usually very roomy. And so it may take a long time before any of the married sons attempt to live elsewhere. This is also a boon to the old people, of course, as in this way they always find a home for their old age with one of their married children.

From now on the young wife will have little time for pleasure, and, although it would be wrong to call her a slave, in our eyes at least she will be leading the life of a drudge. She will be the first to begin work and the last to finish it. Every day she will have to prepare the meals and to clean the dishes; most of her mornings, if not her entire days, will be passed in the field; and when coming back home in the afternoon, she will have to comply with her usual household duties: pound the rice or grind the corn, and feed the hogs. Most of the time she will have to nurse a baby while attending to her other work, not that the little ones come in such quick succession, as usually at least a year and a half elapses between the birth of two children, and very often one or more of them die in infancy, but because the time of nursing is not confined to the first year of her babe: even children two and three years old may be found occasionally partaking of their mother's milk and using it as a supplementary food.

The husband on the contrary will find his married life to be very little different from what he had been used to before. His life may perhaps even appear lighter to him now than it was before he contracted marriage, as he will be mostly his own master, and he will not pass so many sleepless nights as when, as a young man, he was assiduously courting the girls, a custom that plays havoc with the health of a good many Isneg boys.

1. Domestic Relationships

The Isneg husband is the head of the family, and ultimate decisions are always taken by him; nevertheless the woman is no unimportant entity in the government of the house. An Isneg man rarely transacts any important business without the consent of the women folk, and he is usually humble and obedient at the smallest hint of his

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592 562 578 [201] wife. Especially when the women have attained a more or less advanced age, their tongue usually rules the household; and in this they have a very sharp-cutting instrument indeed. The husband may occasionally vindicate his authority, but most of the time he shrinks from the women's displeasure. Besides, as a last resort, they always have their tears ready at hand; I have assisted more than once, although involuntarily, at family scenes in which the quarrel ended with a flow of tears on the part of the wife and subsequent awkwardness in the manner of the more or less aggressive husband, who finally could find no other way out but meekly to explain, to try to soothe, and to submit. An old woman, be she married or widowed, has generally more than one say in the family. And if a woman has been consecrated a shamaness while in her early childhood, then she commands the respect not only of the household but of her neighbors as well, or rather inspires them with a kind of reverential awe, especially if she is advanced in years.

To resume, both parties help each other in their own way: the husband has a woman to look after his daily needs, and the wife, although taking the lion's share of the work, does not lack compensation in the fact that from now on she has a ready listener whenever she wants to pronounce one of her philippics.

837 As has been amply shown in the preceding pages, and as will appear even more clearly from what will be said of divorce, there can be no question among the Isneg of allowing anybody access to one's wife or of exchanging wives with another man.

831 593 Do Isneg husbands and wives love each other? It has been said about other tribes, here in the Mountain Province, that in their case marriage is nothing else but a juxtaposition of two people, a man and a woman, that the husband is more like a stranger to his wife, that mutual love between husband and wife is something completely unknown. This may perhaps be true with some of them, although I doubt very much if such sweeping statements are entirely consonant with the facts. But does it apply to the Isneg? It must be conceded that in the question of marital love, just as in that of gratitude, outward manifestations are exceedingly sparse among the Isneg. It is also a fact that husband and wife never or almost never work together, which after all is not exactly peculiar to primitive people. But can we truly say that mutual love is unknown between an Isneg husband and his wife? I should answer most emphatically in the negative: Isneg man and wife most certainly love each other. Nevertheless it